BLM LIBRARY
88070570

Northwestern California

STANDARDS

for Rangeland Health

and

GUIDELINES

for Livestock Grazing Management

Prepared by the Bureau of Land Management
California State Office
June 1999

SF
85.35
.C2
R3633
1999
c.2

ID88070570

SF
85.35
.C2
R3633
1999
c.2

United States. Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
http://www.blm.gov

In Reply Refer To:
4180 (220)

MEMORANDUM

To: The Secretary

Through: Sylvia V. Baca Sylvia V Baca
Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management

From: Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Approval of Northwestern California Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing

In accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2(b), the Acting California State Director is submitting for Secretarial approval the attached Northwestern California Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing. BLM review finds that they comply with the requirements of the regulations. Standard and Guidelines development occurred in consultation with the Northwestern California Resource Advisory Council and with full public participation. BLM analyzed these standards and guidelines in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which was protested. BLM appropriately considered and addressed the issues stated in the protests, and used them when it developed the Record of Decision (ROD) following the EIS. The ROD also incorporated the Standards and Guidelines into the appropriate land use plans.

I recommend that you approve the Northwestern California Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing.

I concur with (concur/not concur) with your recommendation and (approve/not approve) the Northwestern California Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing.

Approved: ____________________

Date: JUL 13 2000

Attachment

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES for RANGELAND HEALTH IN NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE 1

2. STANDARDS FOR RANGELAND HEALTH 2
    STANDARD: SOILS 2
    STANDARD: SPECIES 3
    STANDARD: RIPARIAN 4
    STANDARD: WATER QUALITY 5

3. GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT 6

RIPARIAN HABITATS 6
    Guideline 1: Management for riparian-dependent special status species, where they occur, is primary 6
    Guideline 2: Season of use should be short term and allow for plant regrowth and reproduction 6
    Guideline 3: Degraded riparian areas may require complete rest or other change in management practices to initiate the recovery process 7
    Guideline 4: Locate salt blocks and supplemental feed well away from riparian zones 7
    Guideline 5: Locate all livestock handling and management facilities outside of riparian areas 7
    Guideline 6: Limit livestock trailing and watering to those areas and times that will not retard or prevent attainment of standards 7
    Guideline 7: Make temporary changes to livestock grazing management practices, including increases or decreases in stocking rates and seasons of use, in response to important episodic events 7
    Guideline 8: Limit or exclude livestock grazing in identified culturally sensitive areas 7
    Guideline 9: BLM will work with livestock grazing lessees 7
    Guideline 10: Native species are recommended for all revegetation and enhancement projects 7

UPLAND RANGELANDS 8

Annual Rangelands 8
    Guideline 11: Grazing will be managed to achieve the RDM levels of Table A 8
    TABLE A: Residual Dry Matter Guidelines 8
    Guideline 12: Continuous season-long grazing is allowed if it has been demonstrated that it can be consistent with achieving a healthy, properly functioning ecosystem 8
    Guideline 13: Alter livestock grazing or initiate erosion control practices in areas where soil is compacted or prone to accelerated erosion 8
    Guideline 14: BLM will work with livestock grazing lessees 8
    Guideline 15: Make temporary changes to livestock grazing management practices, including increases or decreases in stocking rates and seasons of use in response to important episodic events 8
    Guideline 16: Limit or exclude livestock grazing in identified culturally sensitive areas 8

Guideline 17: Degraded areas may require complete rest or other change in management practices 8
Guideline 18: The plan for grazing on any allotment must consider other uses 8
Guideline 19: Encourage grazing management practices that sustain biological diversity 8
Guideline 20: Implement aggressive action to reduce the invasion of exotic plant species 9
Guideline 21: Utilize prescribed fire and natural prescribed fire 9
Guideline 22: Native species are recommended for all revegetation and enhancement projects 9

Perennial Rangelands 9
Guideline 23: No authorized livestock grazing in new allotments which are native perennial grasslands until guidelines specific to these perennial species are developed and adopted 9
Guideline 24: Perennial grass utilization 9

General Guidelines 10
Guideline 25: There will be no more than 20 percent utilization of annual growth on key browse species prior to October 1 within identified deer concentration areas 10
Guideline 26: Apply the management practices recognized and approved by the State of California as BMP's for grazing related activities to protect and maintain water quality 10
Guideline 27: Protect, enhance, and restore beneficial uses of water 10

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES for RANGELAND HEALTH IN NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

1. PREAMBLE

The standards for rangeland health and guidelines for livestock grazing on BLM administered lands are written to accomplish the four fundamentals of rangeland health insofar as they are affected by livestock grazing practices. These fundamentals are:

(a). Watersheds are properly functioning;
(b). Ecological processes are in order;
(c). Water quality complies with State standards; and
(d). Habitats of protected species are in order.

Additionally, the standards and guidelines must be consistent with those of adopted regional conservation strategies which affect the northwestern California public lands under the purview of the Northwestern California RAC. The Northwest Forest Plan (NFP), approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1994, encompasses the entire range of the northern spotted owl and provides a set of land allocations and standards and guidelines for management activities. It contains both terrestrial and aquatic conservation strategies. Range management standards and guidelines are directed toward attainment of aquatic conservation strategy objectives through management of riparian reserves. The plan entitled Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Streams on Federal Lands in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and Portions of California (PACFISH; USDI and USDA 1995) extends riparian standards and guidelines as in the NFP to all anadromous watersheds beyond the range of the northern spotted owl.

The Ukiah RAC and BLM staff reviewed these standards and guidelines during development of the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing to ensure that the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives of the NFP and Riparian Management Objectives of PACFISH were consistent and that the standards and guidelines were consistent with the BLM's Redding and Arcata Resource Management Plans.

A "standard" serves as the criterion to determine if management actions are resulting in the maintenance or attainment of healthy rangelands per the four fundamentals of rangeland health. Standards are expressions of physical and biological conditions or the degree of function required for healthy sustainable rangelands. Guidelines serve as the vehicle to implement management actions related to livestock grazing to accomplish the rangeland health standards. Guidelines will indicate the types of grazing methods and practices determined to be appropriate to ensure that the standards can be met.

Standards and guidelines will apply to all BLM lands within the geographic area for which they are written. Using the standards and guidelines, the local BLM managers, in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with grazing permittees and other interested parties, will determine terms and conditions for each grazing allotment. These terms and conditions are the specific grazing practices that are appropriate for that allotment.

The BLM lands vary so greatly in topography, climate, soils, water availability, size and distribution of parcels, and other factors that the local managers must have the flexibility needed to determine which grazing practices will work best in each area, and to change those practices when necessary, to achieve the desired rangeland conditions.

Where historical grazing has been compatible with meeting the standards for soils, species, riparian areas, or water quality, no permanent changes should be mandated in the existing grazing patterns without substantial scientific evidence that changing the grazing pattern will improve the ability to achieve the standards.

For any standard, guideline, term, or condition to work, it must be capable of being achieved, based on sound science or good common sense, and be measurable, understandable, and economically feasible. There is no use in setting standards that cannot be met.

2. STANDARDS FOR RANGELAND HEALTH

STANDARD: SOILS

Soils exhibit characteristics of infiltration, fertility, permeability rates, and other functional biological and physical characteristics that are appropriate to soil type, climate, desired plant community, and land form.

Meaning That:

Precipitation is able to enter the soil surface at appropriate rates; the soil is adequately protected against accelerated erosion; and the soil fertility is maintained at appropriate levels.

As Indicated By:

- Ground cover (vegetation and other types of ground cover such as rock) sufficient to protect sites from accelerated erosion.
- Litter/residual dry matter evident, accumulating in place, and showing negligible movement by water.
- A diversity of plant species, including native plants, with a variety of root depths, is present and plants are vigorous during the growing season (Rangeland Health, National Research Council, 1994, page 130, table 4-8).
- There is minimal evidence of accelerated erosion in the form of rills, gullies, pedestaling of plants or rocks, flow patterns, physical soil crusts/surface sealing, or compaction layers below the soil surface.
- Biological (microphytic or cryptogamic) soil crusts, if present, are intact.

STANDARD: SPECIES

Viable, healthy, productive, and diverse populations of native and desired plant and animal species, particularly special status species, are maintained and/or being restored.

Meaning That:

As stated.

As Indicated By:

* Wildlife habitats include seral stages, vegetation structure, and patch size to promote diverse and viable wildlife populations.

* A variety of age classes is present for desired plant species (Rangeland Health, National Research Council, 1994, page 130, table 4-8).

* Plant vigor is adequate to maintain desirable plants and ensure reproduction and recruitment of plants when favorable climatic events occur.

* The spatial distribution of plant and animal species and their habitats allows for reproduction and recovery from localized catastrophic events.

* A diversity of plant species with various developmental stages and rooting depths is present to extend the photosynthetic period and increase energy capture.

* There is evidence of beneficial natural disturbances.

* Non-native, noxious, and invasive species are at acceptable levels.

* Special status species and other local species of concern are healthy and in numbers that appear to ensure stable to increasing populations; habitat areas are large enough to support viable populations or are connected adequately with other similar habitat areas.

* Adequate organic matter (litter and standing dead plant material) is present for site protection and decomposition to replenish soil nutrients and support nutrient cycling.

* Where appropriate, biological soil crusts (also called microphytic or cryptogamic soil crusts) are present and not excessively fragmented.

STANDARD: RIPARIAN

Riparian/wetland vegetation, structure and diversity, and stream channels and floodplains are functioning properly, and meeting regional and local management objectives.

Meaning That:

The vegetation and soils interact to capture and pass sediment, sustain infiltration, maintain the water table, stabilize the channel, sustain high water quality, and promote biodiversity appropriate to soils, climate, and landform.

As Indicated By:

* Naturally occurring vegetation cover will protect banks and dissipate energy during high flows.

* Age-class and structure of woody/riparian vegetation are diverse and appropriate for the site. Recruitment of preferred species is adequate for sustaining the community.

* Where appropriate, habitat is sufficient to provide for plant and animal riparian-dependent species. There is diversity and abundance of insects and amphibians.

* Where appropriate, there is adequate woody debris.

* A diversity of plant species with various developmental stages and rooting depths is present (Rangeland Health, National Research Council, 1994, page 112, and table 4-8, page 130). Root masses are sufficient to stabilize streambanks and shorelines.

* Plant species present indicate that soil moisture characteristics are being maintained.

* Shallow-rooted, invader plant species are not displacing native species.

* Adequate organic matter (litter and standing dead plant material) is present to protect the site and to replenish soil nutrients through decomposition (Rangeland Health, National Research Council, 1994, page 130, table 4-8).

* Point bars are becoming vegetated over time.

* There is adequate streambank stability, morphology, pool frequency, stream width/depth ratio, and minimal substrate sediments and bare ground.

Structural facilities constructed for livestock/wildlife water or other purposes that are not natural wetland and/or riparian areas will be excepted. Examples are: water troughs, stockponds, flood control structures, tailings ponds, water gaps on fenced or otherwise restricted stream corridors, etc.

STANDARD: WATER QUALITY

Surface and groundwater complies with objectives of the Clean Water Act and other applicable water quality requirements, including meeting the California State standards.

Management Objective: For water bodies, the primary objective is to maintain the existing quality and beneficial uses of water, protect them where they are threatened (and livestock grazing activities are a contributing factor), and restore them where they are currently degraded (and livestock grazing activities are a contributing factor). This objective is of even higher priority in the following situations:

(a) where beneficial uses of water bodies have been listed as threatened or impaired pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act;

(b) where aquatic habitat is present or has been present for Federal threatened or endangered, candidate, and other special status species dependent on water resources; and,

(c) in designated water resource sensitive areas such as riparian and wetland areas.

Meaning That:

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, the BLM:

Maintain the physical, biological, and chemical integrity of waters flowing across or underlying the lands it administers;

Protect the integrity of these waters where it is currently threatened;

Insofar as is feasible, restore the integrity of these waters where it is currently impaired;

Not contribute to pollution and take action to remedy any pollution resulting from its actions that violate applicable California water quality standards (including the requirements identified in Regional Basin Plans), or Tribal water quality standards, or other applicable water quality requirements (e.g., requirements adopted by SWRCB or RWQCB in California, or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act or the Coastal Zone Reauthorization Act). Where action related to grazing management is required, such action will be taken as soon as practicable, but not later than the start of the next grazing year (in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.1);

Be consistent with the non-degradation policies identified in the Regional Basin Plans in California;

Work with the State (including the Regional Water Quality Control Boards) and the EPA to establish appropriate beneficial uses for public waters, establish appropriate numeric targets for Section 303(d)-listed water bodies, and implement the applicable requirements to ensure that water quality on public lands meets the criteria for the designated beneficial uses of the water.

Develop and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) approved by the SWRCB to protect and restore the quality and beneficial uses of water, and monitor both implementation and effectiveness of the BMPs. These BMPs will be developed in full consultation, coordination, and cooperation with permittees and other interests.

As Indicated By:

* The following do not exceed the applicable requirements: chemical constituents, water temperature, nutrient loads, fecal coliform, turbidity, suspended sediment, and dissolved oxygen.

* Achievement of the standards for riparian, wetlands, and water bodies.

* Aquatic organisms and plants (e.g., macroinvertebrates, fish, algae and plants) indicate support for beneficial uses.

* Monitoring results or other data that show water quality is meeting the standard.

3. GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

RIPARIAN HABITATS

Guideline 1: Management for riparian-dependent special status species, where they occur, is primary.

Guideline 2: Season of use should be short term and allow for plant regrowth and reproduction. The residual or regrowth should provide sufficient herbaceous forage biomass to meet the requirements of plant vigor maintenance, plant and wildlife habitat, stream shading, bank protection and sediment entrapment. Specific grazing dates will be set in lease terms and conditions.

A 4-6 inch minimum stubble height will remain at the end of the growing season in most riparian areas.

There should be no more than 20 percent utilization on key riparian tree and shrub species in those areas where the presence of woody riparian species is necessary to meet standards.

Management changes will be implemented (e.g., reductions in stocking rate or another management change) if stubble heights on the average of the key riparian areas across the pasture (or allotment if there is only one pasture) fall below the guidelines for 2 consecutive years or in any 2 years out of every 5 years. In addition, at least 70 percent of riparian key areas on the allotment are to exceed minimum stubble heights in most years. If any particular key area fails to meet the guidelines for more than 2 consecutive years, then management action will be taken to remedy the problem in the area of the allotment that key area represents. Because streambanks may be inadequately protected by heavy use in any one year and because stubble heights below 3 inches result in cattle shifting their preference to shrubs, stubble heights below 2 inches in any one year will require a management change in the following year.

The mean stubble height on key riparian species will be estimated at each riparian key area and used to determine if the guidelines have been met. There are indications that the median may be a better statistic

to use than the mean; we will calculate both statistics from the same data sets and make a determination on which statistic to use after examining the data over a period of a few years. See Appendix 20 of the Final EIS for further discussion on this issue.

For allotments not meeting or making significant progress toward meeting the standards (and for which higher stubble would be expected to help move these allotments toward the standards), stubble height data already in hand will be used to determine whether a management change is necessary. For example, if stubble heights on a particular key area have fallen below the thresholds for the 2 years previous to the approval of these standards and guidelines, a management change will be implemented prior to the first grazing year following this approval. In addition to implementing management changes that are expected to bring stubble heights within threshold values, close monitoring will follow to ensure that the grazing use levels are not exceeded during the grazing period following the management changes. If utilization levels are exceeded or expected to be exceeded during this period, a reduction or curtailment of further grazing in the area represented by the key area will be required for the remainder of the grazing season. In addition, further management changes will be implemented prior to the start of the next grazing season to bring utilization levels within thresholds.

Guideline 3: Degraded riparian areas may require complete rest or other change in management practices to initiate the recovery process.

Guideline 4: Locate salt blocks and supplemental feed well away from riparian zones.

Guideline 5: Locate all livestock handling and management facilities outside of riparian areas.

Guideline 6: Limit livestock trailing and watering to those areas and times that will not retard or prevent attainment of standards. Avoid trailing in vernal pools and wetlands whenever possible.

Guideline 7: Make temporary changes to livestock grazing management practices, including increases or decreases in stocking rates and seasons of use, in response to important episodic events (drought, flood, fire, good germination, etc.).

Guideline 8: Limit or exclude livestock grazing in identified culturally sensitive areas where grazing is detrimental to such sites.

Guideline 9: BLM will work with livestock grazing lessees to utilize prescribed fire, fencing, rest-rotation, holistic resource management, integrated pest management, and other innovative management practices where appropriate to protect riparian health.

Guideline 10: Native species are recommended for all revegetation and enhancement projects unless they are not available in sufficient quantities or are incapable of maintaining or achieving properly functioning conditions or biological health.

UPLAND RANGELANDS

Annual Rangelands

Guideline 11: Grazing will be managed to achieve the RDM levels of Table A. If necessary to meet DPC objectives, or if there is a opportunity to promote or enhance native perennial plant communities (including special status plants) to check degradation, then adjust grazing management practices, such as season of use, RDM, stocking level, distribution, pasture rotation, or other range management practices.

TABLE A: Residual Dry Matter Guidelines.
Definition is pounds/acre by slope and precipitation.

Precipitation	Slope 0-25%	Slope 26-45%	Slope 46% and Up
10" - 40"	400 lbs.	600 lbs.	800 lbs.
40" - 60"	750 lbs.	1,000 lbs.	1,250 lbs.
60+"	1,000 lbs.	1,500 lbs.	2,000 lbs.

Guideline 12: Continuous season-long grazing is allowed if it has been demonstrated that it can be consistent with achieving a healthy, properly functioning ecosystem.

Guideline 13: Alter livestock grazing or initiate erosion control practices in areas where soil is compacted or prone to accelerated erosion.

Guideline 14: BLM will work with livestock grazing lessees to utilize prescribed fire, fencing, rest-rotation, holistic resource management, integrated pest management, and other innovative management practices where appropriate.

Guideline 15: Make temporary changes to livestock grazing management practices, including increases or decreases in stocking rates and seasons of use in response to important episodic events (drought, flood, fire, good germination, etc.).

Guideline 16: Limit or exclude livestock grazing in identified culturally sensitive areas where grazing is detrimental to such sites.

Guideline 17: Degraded areas may require complete rest or other change in management practices to initiate the recovery process.

Guideline 18: The plan for grazing on any allotment must consider other uses (recreation, wildlife, mineral resource development, etc.) and be coordinated with other users of the public lands so that overall use does not detract from the goal of achieving rangeland health.

Guideline 19: Encourage grazing management practices that sustain biological diversity across the landscape by providing a mosaic of seral stages and vegetation corridor and minimizing habitat fragmentation.

Guideline 20: Implement aggressive action to reduce the invasion of exotic plant species into native plant communities. Control the spread of noxious weeds through various methods such as grazing management, fire management, and other vegetative management practices.

Guideline 21: Utilize prescribed fire and natural prescribed fire to promote a broad vegetative diversity of healthy plant communities, while creating a mosaic network of interconnected vegetative resources.

Guideline 22: Native species are recommended for all revegetation and enhancement projects unless they are not available in sufficient quantities or are incapable of maintaining or achieving properly functioning conditions of biological health.

Perennial Rangelands

Guideline 23: No authorized livestock grazing in new allotments which are native perennial grasslands until guidelines specific to these perennial species are developed and adopted.

Guideline 24: In existing allotments with perennial grass components, if monitoring or documented observation indicates that one of more of the standards is not being met, and if significant progress is not being made toward meeting all of those standards that are not being met, and if there is evidence that current grazing practices are causing or contributing to this unsatisfactory condition, then the following utilization levels will be applied. These utilization levels will be applied unless and until site-specific utilization levels are developed for specific allotments and documented in allotment management plans, other management plans, and/or in terms and conditions of grazing permits/leases. Site-specific utilization levels may be more restrictive than the guidelines presented below, consistent with achieving the desired resource conditions (as prescribed in land use plans and activity plans) and progress toward meeting these.

UTILIZATION GUIDELINES
(adapted from Holechek 1988 and Holechek, et al. 1998)

Community Type	Percent of Use of Key Herbaceous Species
Salt desert shrubland	25-35
Semi-desert grass and shrubland	30-40
Sagebrush grassland	30-40
Perennial grass communities within the California annual grassland vegetation type	30-40
Coniferous forest	30-40
Mountain shrubland	30-40
Oak woodland	30-40
Pinyon-juniper woodland	30-40

Alpine tundra	20-30

Management changes will be implemented (e.g., reductions in stocking rate or another management change) if utilization guidelines on the average of the upland key areas across the pasture (or allotment if there is only one pasture) are exceeded for 2 consecutive years or in any 2 years out of every 5 years. In addition, at least 70 percent of upland key areas on the pasture (or allotment) are not to exceed maximum utilization guidelines in most years. Because of the potential long-term damage to perennial grass species associated with severe grazing, severe grazing use (>70 percent utilization) in any upland key area in any year will result in a management change the following year. If any particular key area fails to meet the guidelines for more than 2 consecutive years, then management action will be taken to remedy the problem in the area of the allotment that key area represents. The average (mean) utilization on key species will be estimated at each key area and used to determine if the guidelines have been met. There are indications that the median may be a better statistic to use than the mean; we will calculate both statistics from the same data sets and make a determination on which statistic to use after examining the data over a period of a few years. See Appendix 20 of the Final Environmental EIS for further discussion on this issue.

For allotments not meeting or making significant progress toward meeting the standards (and for which lower utilization levels of perennial upland species would be expected to help move these allotments toward the standards), utilization data already in hand will be used to determine whether a management change is necessary. For example, if utilization on a particular key area has exceeded the thresholds in the above table for the two years previous to the approval of these standards and guidelines, a management change will be implemented prior to the first grazing year following this approval. In addition to implementing management changes that are expected to bring utilization levels within threshold values, close monitoring will follow to ensure that the grazing use levels are not exceeded during the grazing period following the management changes. If utilization levels are exceeded or expected to be exceeded during this period, a reduction or curtailment of further grazing in the area represented by the key area will be required for the remainder of the grazing season. In addition, further management changes will be implemented prior to the start of the next grazing season to bring utilization levels within thresholds.

General Guidelines

Guideline 25: There will be no more than 20 percent utilization of annual growth on key browse species prior to October 1 within identified deer concentration areas.

Guideline 26: Apply the management practices recognized and approved by the State of California as BMP's for grazing related activities to protect and maintain water quality.

Guideline 27: In watersheds draining into water bodies that have been listed or are proposed for listing as having threatened or impaired beneficial uses, and where grazing activities may contribute to the pollutants causing such impairment, the management objective is to fully protect, enhance, and restore the beneficial uses of the water.

IMPLEMENTATION of
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES for RANGELAND HEALTH in NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

IMPLEMENTATION

The fallback standards (43 CFR 4180.2(f)(1)) have been in effect in since August 12, 1997. An initial screening of allotments was made, based on existing information, to determine the status of each allotment with respect to meeting the fallback standards. Each allotment was placed into one of four categories as follows:

Category 1:	Areas where one or more standards are not being met, or significant progress is not being made toward meeting the standards(s), and livestock grazing is a significant contributor to the problem.
Category 2:	Areas where all standards are being met, or significant progress is being made toward meeting the standard(s).
Category 3:	Areas where the status for one or more standards is not known, or the cause of the failure to not meet the standard(s) is not known.
Category 4:	Allotments where one or more of the standards are not being met or significant progress is not being made toward meeting the standards due to causes other than (or in addition to) livestock grazing activities. (Those allotments where current livestock grazing is also a cause for not meeting the standards are included in Category 1 in addition to this category.) The authorized officer should take appropriate action based on regulation or policy; however, these actions not related to livestock grazing are outside the scope of this implementation plan and will not be addressed in this document.

An assumption has been made by the BLM field managers that, with few possible exceptions, the implementation needed for the regulatory fallback standards and guidelines will essentially be the same as for any anticipated set of final approved standards and guidelines implemented pursuant to this Record of Decision (ROD). Consequently, the categorization of allotments under the standards in this ROD is likely to be the same as the categorization under the fallback standards and guidelines. Existing allotment assessments and their resulting determinations as to category will be reviewed to ensure the determination is correct under the standards set in place by this ROD.

New allotment assessments, reviews of existing allotment assessments, and determination of allotment category will be conducted in full consultation, coordination, and cooperation with permittees and other interests.

We intend to conduct assessments on all allotments within the next 5 years. First priority for these allotment assessments will be given to those allotments where we already know or suspect one or more of the standards is not being met. These include those allotments placed in Category 1 under the fallback standards and those allotments currently in Category 3 that we have reason to believe may not be meeting standards. After these allotments have been assessed, the remaining allotments will be assessed using the BLM I, M, and C priority management system, with first priority to I, second to M, and last to C.

For those allotments where the standards are not being met (Category 1), management actions will be

implemented to correct the situation prior to the next grazing season turn-out period for the allotment. The management options will be determined in full coordination, consultation, and cooperation with permittees and other interests.

Monitoring will be conducted to evaluate the progress towards improving rangeland health and to evaluate the success of the specific management measures applied.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

Once the guidelines are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, they will be applicable to the management of livestock grazing on all allotments not meeting the health standards. Some guidelines will be applicable regardless of the specific rangeland health condition, as they are designed to help protect and sustain rangeland health and are not intended to be applied only to remedy problems. Many of the guidelines will need to be more specifically identified and then applied as terms and conditions of a permit or lease, based upon the specific needs for meeting rangeland health standards. There will be instances where specific terms and conditions will be applied to grazing use authorizations for reasons other than those directly related to rangeland health, such as to accommodate other resource needs and land uses or to meet administrative requirements. Examples of this may include protecting cultural resource sites, requiring a specific breed of livestock to be used that is compatible with the needs of other permittees or lessees using the same allotment, or for meeting various regulatory requirements for grazing administration purposes. In some instances, existing terms and conditions will be carried over from previously made plans and commitments, such as those identified in allotment management plans or coordinated management plans. In these instances, the terms and conditions may or may not be related to rangeland health needs.

This Record of Decision contains utilization and stubble height guidelines (Guidelines 2 and 24) that apply to all allotments that do not meet the standards and are not making significant progress toward meeting the standards (and for which lower utilization levels or higher levels of stubble or residue would be expected to help move these allotments toward the standards). These guidelines will be implemented unless and until Field Offices develop site-specific utilization, residue, and stubble height guidelines. Until the standards are achieved or significant progress toward meeting the standards is being made, site-specific guidelines can be more but not less restrictive than those in these guidelines.

Guidelines 2 and 24 will be applied to those areas of the allotment responsible for the determination that the allotment is not meeting the standards. For example, an allotment has 10 riparian areas, of which 6 have been determined to be in proper functioning condition and 4 have been determined to be functional–at risk. The utilization guidelines for riparian species would be applied to the 4 riparian areas that are functional–at risk, not to the 6 that are in proper functioning condition (although all of the riparian areas will be managed to meet the standards). Also, only those guidelines that are applicable to making progress toward meeting the standards that are not being met would be applied. For example, if only riparian standards are not being met, then only the guidelines applicable to utilization and stubble height of riparian vegetation would be applied.

Although the implementation of utilization and stubble height levels is an important tool to restore and maintain rangeland health, it is only one of many tools that will be employed to meet the rangeland health

standards. Other tools that will be implemented as appropriate include the other guidelines outlined in this document, changes in season of use, timing, duration, and/or intensity of grazing; rotational grazing; fencing; herding; and adjustments in stocking rate.

Any terms or conditions specified for a permit or lease must be consistent with and support appropriate BLM land use plans or other land use plans applicable to the public lands (such as the Northwest Forest Plan and PACFISH). BLM will also adhere to requirements such as those identified as terms or conditions from a biological opinion for protecting the habitat of a plant or animal under the Endangered Species Act.

Terms and conditions will be applied to grazing permits, leases, or other grazing authorizations as the authorized officer (Field Manager) determines the need. The determination of what terms and conditions will be applied will be made in consultation with the respective permittees/lessees and other interested parties involved in the particular allotment. The same process will be used for making needed changes to any existing terms and conditions. Information from assessments and evaluations of monitoring data will be used to determine the management changes needed. Management options that would be expected to move allotments toward meeting the standards will be determined in full coordination, consultation, and cooperation with permittees/lessees and other interested parties.

Alternative management changes will be considered and evaluated through the NEPA process prior to making final determinations. It is anticipated that in most instances, the terms and conditions will be identified cooperatively and be agreed upon by the affected permittee/lessee and all interested parties. Where an agreement cannot be reached, then a formal decision (which is appealable) will be issued.

If reductions in permitted use are necessary to achieve the standards or meet the guidelines, the animal unit months (AUMs) by which the permitted use is reduced will be held in suspension. Once the authorized officer determines that rangeland health has recovered to an extent that all or part of the suspended permitted use can be restored, this suspended permitted use shall first be apportioned in satisfaction of suspended permitted use to the permittee(s) or lessee(s) authorized to graze in the allotment in which the forage is available (this is in accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3-1(b)).

REPORTING PROGRESS IN RANGELAND HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS

Rangeland health conditions will be reported annually for each grazing allotment. This information will include the determinations of rangeland health conditions through assessments and monitoring and the progress made towards meeting rangeland health standards. At a minimum the report will identify, by allotment: (1) what standards, if any, are not being met; (2) whether significant progress is being made toward meeting those standards that are not currently being met; (3) the magnitude of those standards not being met, in terms such as acres, miles of stream, number of sites, etc.; (4) the progress that has been made in determining and implementing needed management changes; and (5) the results of making the management changes as determined from monitoring and assessment information. Additionally, any changes in the management categories of the allotments will be identified, accompanied by an explanation of the reasons for the change.

The above information will be gathered at the field office which administers the respective allotment(s). A summary of this information will be consolidated for all of the allotments within the EIS area and made available to the public annually.

Tables were provided in the Final EIS that showed all allotments in the State and the category to which they were assigned in 1997. Since that list was compiled, management changes have been implemented and additional assessment and monitoring work has been completed that makes those lists obsolete. When the annual report is compiled each year, an updated list of all allotments, by category, will be provided as part of the report.

Throughout all processes the public is encouraged to participate in the identification of rangeland health conditions, developing management remedies, monitoring results, and reviewing progress towards achieving rangeland health standards.